

-20-

## CLAIMS

1. A method of configuring a distributed computer system, the method comprising:  
refraining from executing a non-autonomous configuration task of a plurality of configuration tasks of an autonomy-based configuration procedure until authorization is received.
2. A method in accordance with claim 1, further comprising:  
identifying the non-autonomous configuration task based on an autonomy criteria.
3. A method in accordance with claim 2, wherein the autonomy criteria specifies at least one non-autonomous configuration task.
4. A method in accordance with claim 2, wherein the autonomy criteria specify an autonomy policy identifying characteristics of non-autonomous configuration tasks.
5. A method in accordance with claim 4, wherein the autonomy criteria comprise a plurality of rules for identifying the non-autonomous configuration tasks.
6. A method in accordance with claim 1, further comprising:  
establishing the autonomy criteria by entering criteria information through a user interface.
7. A method in accordance with claim 1, further comprising:  
executing the non-autonomous configuration task when authorization is received.
8. A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein the non-autonomous configuration task comprises instructions to change a configuration parameter of a device.

-21-

9. A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein the non-autonomous configuration task comprises instructions to create a configuration object.

10. A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein the non-autonomous configuration task comprises instructions to change a configuration object.

11. A method in accordance with claim 10, wherein the instructions to change a configuration object comprise instructions to associate the configuration object with at least one other configuration object.

12. A method in accordance with claim 10, wherein the instructions to change a configuration object comprise instructions to create an additional configuration object based on the configuration object.

13. A method in accordance with claim 10, wherein the instructions to change a configuration object comprise instructions instructing the configuration object to perform a function upon the configuration object.

14. A method in accordance with claim 10, wherein the instructions to change a configuration object comprise instructions instructing the configuration object to perform a function upon another configuration object.

15. A method of configuring a distributed computer system, the method comprising:

- retrieving autonomy criteria identifying at least one non-autonomous configuration task that should not be autonomously executed;
- identifying the at least one non-autonomous configuration task by applying the autonomy criteria to each configuration task of an autonomy-based configuration procedure for configuring a distributed computer system;
- requesting authorization for executing the at least one configuration task;
- and
- refraining from executing the non-autonomous configuration task until

-22-

authorization is received from an administrator.

16. A method in accordance with claim 15, wherein the requesting comprises:  
generating an inquiry identifying the at least one non-autonomous configuration task and indicating that administrator input is required to execute the unauthorized configuration task.

17. A method in accordance with claim 16, further comprising:  
executing the non-autonomous configuration task after the administrator input is received, the administrator input acknowledging the unauthorized configuration task should be executed.

18. A method in accordance with claim 15, further comprising:  
aborting the configuration procedure when the administrator input is received, the administrator input indicating the non-autonomous configuration task should not be executed.

19. A method of configuring a distributed computer system, the method comprising:  
receiving autonomy criteria entered by an administrator through a user interface;  
retrieving autonomy criteria identifying at least one non-autonomous configuration task that should not be executed without authorization, the non-autonomous configuration task resulting in a change of at least one configuration parameter when executed;  
identifying the at least one non-autonomous configuration task by applying the autonomy criteria to each configuration task of an autonomy-based configuration procedure for configuring a distributed computer system;  
requesting authorization for executing the at least one non-autonomous configuration task; and  
refraining from executing the unauthorized configuration task until authorization is received from an administrator.

-23-

20. A management server for managing a distributed computer system, the management server comprising:

computer-executable logic stored on a computer readable medium, the computer-executable logic configured to cause the following steps to occur:

retrieving autonomy criteria identifying at least one non-autonomous configuration task that should not be autonomously executed;

identifying the at least one non-autonomous configuration task by applying the autonomy criteria to each configuration task of an autonomy-based configuration procedure for configuring a distributed computer system;

requesting authorization for executing the at least one configuration task;

and

refraining from executing the non-autonomous configuration task until authorization is received from an administrator.

21. A management server in accordance with claim 20, wherein the step of requesting comprises:

generating an inquiry identifying the at least one non-autonomous configuration task and indicating that administrator input is required to execute the unauthorized configuration task.

22. A management server in accordance with claim 21, the computer-executable logic configured to further cause the following step to occur:

executing the non-autonomous configuration task after the administrator input is received, the administrator input acknowledging the unauthorized configuration task should be executed.

23. A management server in accordance with claim 20, the computer-executable logic configured to further cause the following step to occur:

aborting the configuration procedure when the administrator input is received, the administrator input indicating the non-autonomous configuration task should not be executed.

-24-

24. A program product for managing a distributed computer system, the program product comprising:

computer-executable logic contained on a computer-readable medium and configured for causing the following computer-executed steps to occur:

retrieving autonomy criteria identifying at least one non-autonomous configuration task that should not be autonomously executed;

identifying the at least one non-autonomous configuration task by applying the autonomy criteria to each configuration task of an autonomy-based configuration procedure for configuring a distributed computer system;

requesting authorization for executing the at least one configuration task;  
and

refraining from executing the non-autonomous configuration task until authorization is received from an administrator.

25. A program product in accordance with claim 24, wherein the step of requesting comprises:

generating an inquiry identifying the at least one non-autonomous configuration task and indicating that administrator input is required to execute the unauthorized configuration task.

26. A program product in accordance with claim 24, the computer-executable logic configured to further cause the following step to occur:

executing the non-autonomous configuration task after the administrator input is received, the administrator input acknowledging the unauthorized configuration task should be executed.

27. A program product in accordance with claim 25, the computer-executable logic configured to further cause the following step to occur:

aborting the configuration procedure when the administrator input is received, the administrator input indicating the non-autonomous configuration task should not be executed.

-25-

28. In a distributed computer system having a plurality of storage devices and a computer having application software for which data related to the application software may be stored on a storage device of the plurality of storage devices, a method for configuring the distributed computer system, the method comprising the step of:

refraining from executing a non-autonomous configuration task of a plurality of configuration tasks of an autonomy-based configuration procedure until authorization is received.

29. A method in accordance with claim 28, further comprising:  
identifying the non-autonomous configuration task based on an autonomy criteria.

30. A method in accordance with claim 29, wherein the autonomy criteria specifies at least one non-autonomous configuration task.

31. A method in accordance with claim 29, wherein the autonomy criteria specify an autonomy policy identifying characteristics of non-autonomous configuration tasks.

32. A method in accordance with claim 31, wherein the autonomy criteria comprise a plurality of rules for identifying the non-autonomous configuration tasks.

33. A method in accordance with claim 28, further comprising:  
establishing the autonomy criteria by entering criteria information through a user interface.

34. A method in accordance with claim 28, further comprising:  
executing the non-autonomous configuration task when authorization is received.

35. A method in accordance with claim 28, wherein the non-autonomous configuration task comprises instructions to change a configuration parameter of a device.

-26-

36. A method in accordance with claim 28, wherein the non-autonomous configuration task comprises instructions to create a configuration object.

37. A method in accordance with claim 28, wherein the non-autonomous configuration task comprises instructions to change a configuration object.

38. A method in accordance with claim 28, wherein the instructions to change a configuration object comprise instructions to associate the configuration object with at least one other configuration object.

39. A method in accordance with claim 28, wherein the instructions to change a configuration object comprise instructions to create an additional configuration object based on the configuration object.

40. A method in accordance with claim 28, wherein the instructions to change a configuration object comprise instructions instructing the configuration object to perform a function upon the configuration object.

41. A method in accordance with claim 28, wherein the instructions to change a configuration object comprise instructions instructing the configuration object to perform a function upon another configuration object.

42. A data storage system that communicates with a computer which has application software that manipulates data that may be stored on the data storage system and the system including computer-executable logic for configuring a distributed computer system, the data storage system comprising:

a plurality of storage devices; and

computer-executable logic configured for causing the following computer-executed steps to occur:

retrieving autonomy criteria identifying at least one non-autonomous configuration task that should not be autonomously executed;

identifying the at least one non-autonomous configuration task by

-27-

applying the autonomy criteria to each configuration task of an autonomy-based configuration procedure for configuring a distributed computer system;

requesting authorization for executing the at least one configuration task;

and

refraining from executing the non-autonomous configuration task until authorization is received from an administrator.

43. A data storage system in accordance with claim 42, wherein the step of requesting comprises:

generating an inquiry identifying the at least one non-autonomous configuration task and indicating that administrator input is required to execute the unauthorized configuration task.

44. A data storage system in accordance with claim 43, the computer-executable logic configured to further cause the following step to occur:

executing the non-autonomous configuration task after the administrator input is received, the administrator input acknowledging the unauthorized configuration task should be executed.

45. A data storage system in accordance with claim 42, the computer-executable logic configured to further cause the following step to occur:

aborting the configuration procedure when the administrator input is received, the administrator input indicating the non-autonomous configuration task should not be executed.

46. A management server for managing a distributed computer system, the management server comprising:

retrieving means for retrieving autonomy criteria identifying at least one non-autonomous configuration task that should not be autonomously executed;

identifying means for identifying the at least one non-autonomous configuration task by applying the autonomy criteria to each configuration task of an autonomy-based configuration procedure for configuring a distributed computer system;



-28-

requesting means for requesting authorization for executing the at least one configuration task; and

refraining means for refraining from executing the non-autonomous configuration task until authorization is received from an administrator.

47. A management server in accordance with claim 46, wherein the requesting means comprises:

generating means for generating an inquiry identifying the at least one non-autonomous configuration task and indicating that administrator input is required to execute the unauthorized configuration task.

48. A management server in accordance with claim 47 further comprising:  
executing means for executing the non-autonomous configuration task after the administrator input is received, the administrator input acknowledging the unauthorized configuration task should be executed.

49. A management server in accordance with claim 46, the management server further comprising:

an aborting means for aborting the configuration procedure when the administrator input is received, the administrator input indicating the non-autonomous configuration task should not be executed.